

Cultural arts center project advances

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HIGH POINT — A High Point City Council committee unanimously backed a proposal Wednesday to donate city land for a \$32 million cultural arts center in east High Point.

The cultural arts center represents the vision of local filmmaker, businesswoman and community historian Phyllis Bridges.

The recommendation for the approval of the land donation by the Prosperity and Livability Committee will go to the full City Council for approval. The next meeting of the full council will take place at 5:30 p.m. July 19 at City Hall at 211 S. Hamilton St.

Bridges had briefed councilmembers and city leaders when she originally pitched the land donation idea earlier this year. But Wednesday's committee meeting filled in more details, such as the investment figure for the project and the support that Bridges has lined up for the cultural arts center.

Representatives of local general contractor Samet Corp. told council members that they are prepared to construct the cultural arts center, which would be a 53,000-square-foot building on 8 total acres along Washington Street at the University Parkway bridge. Samet representatives said the cultural arts center would take a year and a half to complete.

The cultural arts center has received the support of Visit High Point, the city's primary

SEE CENTER/PAGE A2



SPECIAL | HPE

A rendering of the cultural arts center proposed for Washington Street is shown.

CENTER

FROM PAGE A1

convention and visitors recruitment center, president Melody Burnett said.

"We have been working behind the scenes with Phyllis," Burnett told the council members. "The timing is now to bring her vision to reality. This is a tourism home run."

Bridges presented city leaders with a pair of letters of support from state Rep. Cecil Brockman, D-Guilford, and the Earl and Kathryn Congdon Foundation.

In his letter, Brockman references a bill he filed during this year's N.C. General Assembly session to secure \$2 million in state funds for the project.

In its letter, the foundation

says it will consider a grant application for \$1 million in capital funding for construction of the cultural arts center.

Bridges told The High Point Enterprise following her presentation that she will have more details to release on the project in conjunction with the full council's consideration of the land donation.

Acting City Manager Randy McCaslin said the city has donated land in the past to nonprofit organizations, but it doesn't happen often. The last time the city donated property to nonprofits was 2002 when land was donated for the Macedonia Family Resource Center and a satellite facility for the YMCA of Greater High Point.

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